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a beautiful champaign country, embosomed in hills, and thickly studded with elegant seats; on the right hand I beheld the sea, and on the left some stupendous mountain scenery, in original wildness, mocking the sturdy efforts of labour, and forming a striking contrast with the finely cultivated country to which I was descending.

The mind naturally dilates itself, on such happy prospects being presented to the view; here the peasantry, from their more moderate toil, and from the salubrious situation of the country, appeared more hale and robust, than in most other places through which I passed, and the soil from being of a fine sandy substance, has a rich and exuberant appearance. I could not help thinking that the minds of men assimilate themselves, to the nature of the country which they inhabit: if this is sterile and mountainous, those are blunt and adventurous; if rich and fertile they are gentle and contented; nor need we travel to France and Switzerland to adjust this remark; we have only to look a few miles around us, and be fully satisfied on the subject.

Newtownmavaddy is a handsome little town, built generally of brick, of which there are some exceeding good houses, its principal street is straight and spacious, the river Roe describes a kind of semicircle on its western side, and on its banks are some of the most picturesque landscapes I have ever seen. Its inhabitants have an easy politeness which is very agreeable, the greater number of whom, instead of spending their leisure hours in idle frivolity; cultivate music, painting, &c. or recreate their minds in pointing out to each other, the several beauties of Homer, Shakspeare, Milton, &c. while some of them have "Waked the strong divinity of soul," and produced works highly creditable to themselves.

I understand that a respectable lady of this place, means to favour the public with a volume of poems (now nearly printed) which are highly spoken of in the circles where elegant taste and correct judgment prevail. It is wished they may

meet the warm expectations entertained of them by the enlightened people of this country.

I staid here a few days, and returned by Garvagh, Kilrea, &c. but as this route has been already well described in a former number, I shall not trouble you with a repetition; I am, gentlemen, yours, &c. S.

Ballymena.

To a Proprietor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,
TO a traveller of taste, the beauties of nature cannot but be interesting, and we should feel thankful to those who endeavour to picture to our minds, what our eye has not seen. Yet the gratitude is rather due to the intention, than to the execution; for every man's own experience will be sufficient to prove to him the absolute insufficiency of the most accurate verbal description to convey a just idea of nature's scenic beauties. A lively eloquent description may present some ideas, but they are, compared with the ideas of the narrator, feeble and indistinct, and most probably seldom, if ever, corresponding with the original of the verbal portrait. Books of travels therefore, or descriptions of the wonders of nature or art, should, it would appear, be sparing of dwelling much in words, on what may be much more easily "presented to the mind, by being subjected to the faithful eyes," through engraving. An occasional dilatation on a favourite view, or an attempt at communicating to the reader, what the writer has *really* felt, is allowable; but surely it will be unanimously allowed, that the turgid declamation in common-place language, on common-place topics, incessantly repeated, deserves to be spurned with disgust. This disgusting excess of the descriptive seems to originate in an attempt to supply by declamation, barrenness of incident. In the present state of civilization in Europe, a man of common sense might travel in the most provoking security, from one end of the Continent to the other, and if he be a man of truth, he will find himself driven to the hills, and dales, and precipices, and statues, and paintings,

for materials to fill his book ; nay he will rummage *kitchens* for something to remark on. We may add to this that our travellers, who are so wonderfully quick-sighted as to be able almost to count the grains in the knotted oak, seem to have altogether overlooked that biped animal, man, which they must have occasionally encountered in their journey. Hence flourishing bleach-greens, neat houses, elegant mansions, and lofty spires, glitter through their pages ; but very little is said of those through whom the meadow smiles, or *spires aspire*. "The proper study of mankind is man : " this is strictly true, in the sense which implies, that man should be a leading, not an exclusive study, and it seems surprising, that this truth has not been more impressed on those who have at times complimented the public with the fruits of their observations. This truth has been so impressed on my mind, that possibly I may have fallen into the opposite extreme, and have perhaps been culpably negligent of those beauties, which nature hath so bountifully scattered through this island, to which chiefly my little excursions have been confined. You will not wonder therefore, if the itineraries presented in some of your late numbers, have not the charms for me that they probably have for the writers, and that a mere detail of towns, and villages, and mountains, &c. do not interest me.

A striking, and as it appears to me, an interesting, subject for observation offers—nay, obtrudes itself in the repulsive exterior of northern manners. This part of Ireland, is beyond a doubt the pride of Ireland. The wealth, the populousness, the highly cultivated appearance of the greater part of the northern counties, are indisputable proofs of the spirit and industry of the inhabitants, as the high esteem, in which they are held by those, with whom they hold commercial intercourse, is a proof of their integrity. But the diamond wants the polish ; it is true, that polish *in itself*, is trifling ; but without it, what is the diamond ? Scarcely to be distinguished from the vulgar pebbles, with which it lies. To speak in the spirit of trade, politeness, or its more

accessible substitute, civility, costs nothing ; it may therefore be freely bestowed ; and cheap as it is, we may know from our own feelings, how highly it is prized by those, to whom it is paid. Besides, the absence of it, is not the mere *negation* of a quality : it is positive rudeness, and partakes more or less of insult. There are certain forms, established by all nations, indicative of respect ; and however trifling these may be, whether the taking off the shoes, or merely touching the hat, the withholding of them is naturally construed into disrespect, and when the person, we converse with, feels himself treated with contempt, he presents to us in the feeling of offended pride, a fence that we shall find difficult to pass or to remove.

This defect in polish, becomes among the lower classes, actual insolence. On reading Hamilton's Survey of the County Antrim, it will be found, that this is not the first complaint on the subject, and from my own experience I must add, that the description given by Wild, of the ruggedness of American manners, would very nearly apply here. A temper and behaviour, something like these, in the English, have been frequently defended and extolled, as the fruits and evidences of liberty and independence ; but to me rudeness and independence seem to have no necessary connexion. On the contrary, a person endeavouring to prove his freedom by his insolence, would appear to me, like a recently enfranchised slave, abusing a thing, new to him, through ignorance. The intercourse of free men of liberal minds, would effect mutual suavity of manners. They would consider each other with respect, and have regard to each others feelings and the effect of this, however it may vary in the expression, would be to promote civility, and banish rugged insolence of manners.

Christmas day, as it is celebrated in this country, is another subject for a traveller's consideration, and one, that may happen to speak *very feelingly* to his own person. Do not be alarmed sir, I do not mean to touch on polemical touch-paper ;—

guns and gun-powder, with the *unlicensed* abuse of them are the object of my observation. On that day in last year I was a traveller, and only my horse was very steady, my journey might have come to a conclusion sooner than I had designed. My way was through Belfast, and I naturally expected to pass through and go on, with the same tranquillity as I have often before. My expectations however, were woefully traversed. As I approached your town, I was surprised to meet a great number of people, carrying muskets and fowling pieces of all bores and sizes. A continual hedge-firing was kept up, and much noise was heard on all sides. At first I was a little apprehensive about my horse, and by and by, when I had time to notice the effect of the firing on the birds, I began to be apprehensive for my horse. My first apprehension was, that he might be frightened, my second that he might be wounded.

I conclude, kind sir, that you pass the dreary time of winter, principally with your books, and that you are not often called on by any duty to traverse miry roads on wintry days; therefore it is possible, that this *neat* and *appropriate* celebration of Christmas day, may have been without your knowledge. If you had not been eye-witness to it, you might be pardonable for supposing me inclined to exaggerate; but believe me, I speak within compass, when I say, that I cannot compare the exhibition of *fusileers*, on that day, to any thing with more propriety, than to an army in disguise. One might have been tempted to suppose, that the garrison of Belfast had had a *hedge and field* day, and that they had been sent out in coloured clothes to maintain a sham fight in ambush with an invading enemy.—There were, indeed, "*quot milia magnis nunquam venere Mycenis*;" more hundreds than ever came from the office for licenses. One friend of mine having a spirited horse, and perhaps not being a very good horseman, got two falls in consequence of the general alarm through the country. Horsemen, however, were not the only beings driven from their seats.

The thrush, the blackbird, the sparrow, the red breast; all heard the thundering mandate given, and fled to places more remote.

Now kind sir, supposing that from studious habits you are not much acquainted with the laws relating to sporting, you know, I presume, that a heavy penalty may be laid on any unlicensed person, who carries any weapon, &c. for the destruction of game. The great mass of the sportsmen on this occasion were of that description. What then must we think of the administration of our laws in this country, when such things are permitted? yet I would not be too severe in this case, and I shall therefore endeavour to frame an excuse for the magistrates, who failed in their duty, and a justification for those, who seemed to have transgressed. Of the former let us charitably suppose, that they *did not hear the firing*; and of the others, let the truth be told, that the weapons they bore, were not for the destruction of *game*, as a proof—no game was killed.

I have other things to present to your notice; but I should wish before I write any more, to know whether this will suit your publication.—If you insert it, you shall hear from me again; if not, my labour is saved; in either case, I am sir, yours, &c. PEREGRINE.

January 10, 1810.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

A LETTER TO A STUDENT AT COLLEGE.

SIR,

SO it seems you have felt a little the rubs of life on your passage to college. You were going to the school of that philosophy which professes to teach submission to disasters; and lest you should not improve by theoretic instructions you have been favoured by an introductory lesson from Mrs. Experience. You wisely resolve not to take the same route again. I grant that, to be three days at sea, to be within sight of the desired haven, driven back, tossed hither and thither, under all the nausea of sea sickness, cribbed in a sloop's cabin; she logging this hour,